Columbia Southern University

Doctoral Dissertation 2013 Handbook

Nondiscrimination Policy

CSU provides equal educational opportunity and does not discriminate with respect to race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, physical handicap, age, marital status, gender or status such as a disabled veteran.

Policy Disclaimer

At CSU, we are committed to ensuring that our students are kept informed of the latest principles, theories, and applications pertaining to their studies. However, CSU reserves the right to make changes as deemed appropriate in our course offerings, curricula, academic policies, and other rules and regulations affecting students without prior notification.

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Scope of the Dissertation Handbook

The Dissertation Handbook represents a student's academic guidebook. After reading this handbook and completing DBA 7000, Doctoral Student Orientation, you will have a basic understanding of the student expectations of the DBA program at CSU. The handbook was created to introduce the basic functions of the dissertation committee, during the iterative process of writing a dissertation / research project, and to outline the major milestones in the research process. The last portion includes the Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and responsibilities. Additional resources, templates, guides, and information that supplement this handbook are located in the Student Success Center. Students are encouraged to visit the Student Success Center frequently to explore the resources provided there.

1.0 Dissertation

1.1 Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral students in both the dissertation and research project concentrations are required to complete a dissertation/project that will be approved by and defended before a dissertation committee. The defense may take part "at a distance" and no degree shall be awarded without majority of committee approval. Information regarding this capstone doctoral requirement is published here in the Dissertation Handbook.

1.2 Time Limits

Doctoral students must complete all program requirements through CSU within ten (10) years of initial course enrollment. The estimated time of completion of this program is six (6) years.

1.3 Candidacy Status

Students will have earned DBA Candidacy Status following the successful completion of either DBA 9101-Comprehensive Exams or DBA 9201-Comprehensive Review, depending on which option that the student is enrolled within their program.

1.4 Residency Requirement

The Doctor of Business Administration program at CSU has no physical residency requirement. All of the student's course work, including the defense of the dissertation or project report, can be done at a distance.

2.0 Program Options

Students enrolling into the DBA program choose Track I or Track II program options upon enrollment. A change to the initial decision on doctoral program options can be made any time during the program with the advice and counsel of the Doctoral Program Director. Both program options require that original research be conducted.

2.1 Track I: Dissertation

The DBA is completed once the dissertation is approved and successfully defended. This program track is designed for professionals who wish to fulfill their career academia. Completion of this program track prepares students to conduct significant research and contribute to the body of knowledge in their field. Specifically, students should be able to:

- Summarize and integrate current research and theory in their field of study.
- Make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge by: identifying an issue or problem in a unique and useful manner; collecting new data through quantitative or qualitative research; demonstrating the applicability of new methods or treatments; synthesizing and interpreting existing data to gain new insights; or expanding the application of a theory to a new area.
- Students must collect new / original data during the completion of this project.

2.2 Track II: Research Project

The DBA Program is completed with the development of a research project. This program is designed for professionals who wish to fulfill their career as a practioner- based senior manager or consultant. Completion of this option prepares students to address practical and applied research as a basis of making high-level decisions in a corporate or educational setting. Specifically, students should be able to:

- Advance a comprehensive application of theory and research to a real world business challenges.
- Demonstrate how theory and current research is supportive of practitioner- researcher development. This can be done by: extending the application of an existing model (i.e. balanced scorecard, McKenzie 7 S, etc.) or theory found in the literature; proposing counter arguments to existing models or theories;

or expanding and demonstrating how existing models or theories can be integrated into existing business methods and procedures based upon research.
- Students must collect new/original data and/or synthesize existing theory and current research during the completion of this project.

3.0 The Dissertation Committee

3.1 Dissertation Committee Composition

The Dissertation Committee provides a student with the guidance, direction, and support that is needed to complete all phases of the dissertation. The Committee consists of three Columbia Southern University faculty members (one of whom is designated as the Committee Chair). The required qualifications of the Dissertation Chair and Members are as follows:

Chair of Dissertation Committee

- The ability to coordinate input from committee members while guiding the students research;
- Successful completion of a dissertation from a regionally accredited institution;
- Demonstrated record of research and/or doctoral level teaching appropriate to the program and degree specialization;
- A terminal degree determined by the discipline and specialization that is contained within a doctoral program.

Member of Dissertation Committee

- Terminal degree determined by the discipline and specialization that is related to the student's field of study
- Successful completion of a dissertation from a regionally accredited institution
- Demonstrated record of research and/or doctoral level teaching and/or practical experience appropriate to the program and degree specialization

3.2 Selection of Committee Members

Upon successful completion of the Comprehensive Exams, students will be notified by their Student Service Representative that they will need to propose the members of their Dissertation Committee (consisting of one Chair and two members). The student will need to contact their Student Service Representative for more information on when and how to begin to think about their committee. Final determination of the student's chosen committee will be authorized by the Program Director of the Doctoral program.

3.3 Responsibilities of Committee Members

The ultimate responsibility of the Dissertation Committee is to determine whether the Learner has demonstrated the competencies and the accomplishments requisite to the award of their degree. It is the responsibility of Committee Members to:

- Evaluate the student's Concept Paper, Methodology Chapter, IRB, Proposal/Project Report, Manuscript, subsequent iterations of each of these documents, and provide written feedback to the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee.
- Participate in the defense of your dissertation or project report, discuss the defense with other committee members, and vote on approval or disapproval. Complete the Assessment of Oral Defense form and submit the form to the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee.
- Perform additional committee functions concerning evaluation of the student's work as requested by the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee.
- Sign the dissertation or project report after all revisions have been made.
- Maintain communication and respond to all messages within 48 hours.
- Communicate directly with a student only when directed to do so by the Dissertation Committee Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Program Director of the DBA program;
- Participate in teleconferences or other interactive modes of communication when directed to do so by the Dissertation Committee Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Program Director of the DBA program.

3.4 Responsibilities of the Dissertation Chair

In addition to the responsibilities listed above for Committee Members, the Chair:

- Is the direct contact with the student and manages the communications and processes of the committee.
- Submits an approved copy of the Concept Paper, Methodology Chapter, IRB, Proposal/Project Report, Manuscript, and subsequent iterations to members of the Dissertation/Project Committee for their review and approval.
- Submits a written critique of the Dissertation committee's evaluation of the Concept Paper, Methodology Chapter, IRB, Proposal/Project Report, Manuscript, and subsequent iterations to the student.
- Coordinates necessary revisions of the Concept Paper, Methodology Chapter, IRB, Proposal/Project Report, Manuscript, and subsequent iterations required with the student.
- Submits copies of the proposed methodology to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for their review and approval. The IRB, regardless of the nature of the intended research, must review all research methodologies before research can begin.
- Submits the Proposal Assessment and Review form, completed by members of the Dissertation Committee, to the student.
- Submits a grade for each course.
- Assists in establishing a date and time for the oral defense.
- Notifies all members of the Dissertation/Project Committee, available faculty and interested peers of the date and time of the defense. The notice shall include the student's name, the title of the dissertation or project report, and the procedures for attending the defense either in person or remotely.
- Submits the Assessment of Dissertation or Project Report review form, completed by

members of the Dissertation/ Project Committee, to the student and to the Chair of Doctoral Studies.

- Solicits input from voting members of the Dissertation/Project Committee concerning the oral defense and notifies the student of the decision. The decision can be:
  - * Accept the oral defense without revision.
  - * Accept the oral defense with minor revisions as specified.
  - * Accept the oral defense with substantial revisions that would require review and approval of the Dissertation/ Project Committee.
  - * Reject the oral defense in accordance with written concerns.
  - * The student will be told at that time if further work or defense of the dissertation is required.
- Signs the dissertation or project report approval page and coordinates obtaining the signatures of the other committee members.

3.5 Document Review Times

Type of Review	Committee Review: will return to Dissertation Chair within	Dissertation Chair will return to student within
Concept Paper	DBA Committee 5 calendar days	10 calendar days
Methodology	DBA Committee 5 calendar days	12 calendar days
Institutional Review Board	IRB Committee 10 calendar days	14 calendar days
Proposal Review	DBA Committee 5 calendar days	12 calendar days
Manuscript review	DBA Committee 5 calendar days	12 calendar days

3.6 Working with a Committee

Any and all communication between the student and his/her Chair must be timely, responses to communications should be within 48 hours, and professional. The chair should coordinate any communication with the other committee members and IRB following the established process outlined in the Student Success Center. All communications should go through the chair. All concerned should maintain a positive, respectful, and professional relationship. Chairs may also choose to communicate with the students via telephone, or teleconference.

3.7 Changes in Committee Assignments

Students may request to replace a committee member only in certain situations and only after consulting with their committee Chair. The students must make the request in writing to their committee Chair, (who will send the request to the Program Director of the DBA program by emailing dba@columbiasouthern.edu) and must, as a courtesy, communicate their decision to make the request to the committee member concerned.

The Chair of the committee will then consult with the Program Director of the DBA program and make the decision that is in the best interest of the student. If the decision is made to replace the member in question, the Chair and the Program Director will choose a new member and contact them for their interest in serving on the student's committee.

If the new member is in agreement, that faculty member will then contact the student and proceed with their participation on the student's committee. The Program Director will then email dba@columbiasouthern.edu to update the students file.

Students may request to replace their Committee Chair only in certain situations and only after consulting directly with the Program Director of the DBA program at CSU. The students must make the request in writing to the Program Director of the DBA program at CSU who will then deliberate on a decision. The Program Director will then notify the student in writing via email of the final decision. This decision cannot be appealed at any administrative or academic level.

The university can designate a new chair or committee member if it has been determined that it is in the best interest of the student. Reasons for this decision may include, but are not limited to, the program director's determination that the topic, quality of the project, or supervision of the project are not satisfactory in some manner. If such action is required, the student and the committee members involved will be notified by the university.

For cases where there may be conflicts between voting members of the Dissertation/Project Committee, that cannot be successfully resolved within the committee, the issue(s) will be taken to the Program Director for the DBA program for resolution. The decision of the Program Director for the DBA program, on matters concerning functions of the Dissertation/Project Committee, is final.

4.0 The Dissertation Process*

**Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information and resources there.*

4.1 Identifying a Dissertation Topic

The process of writing a dissertation begins with the identification of a topic. Your topic is the area of study in your field that your dissertation research will contribute. Ideally, it is a good idea to examine how being an expert on a topic might enhance your career opportunities. While the general topic will start here, the specific question researched must be based upon the current literature.

Your dissertation topic should:

1. Summarize and integrate current empirical research and theory in your field of study. It is suggested that you concentrate primarily on work accomplished within the last five years, although some topics may require more in-depth historical development.
2. Make a significant contribution of the existing body of knowledge on the topic. This can be done several ways, such as identifying an issue or problem in a unique and useful manner, collecting new data through quantitative or qualitative research, demonstrating the applicability of a method or treatment, synthesizing, and interpreting existing data to gain new insights, or expanding the application of a theory or previous research conclusions to a new area.
3. Show how a topic area is illuminated, expanded, or changed by the new perspective brought to it.

4.2 Dissertation Program Milestones

There are seven milestones in the CSU dissertation process. Each one represents a significant accomplishment on the way to obtaining a doctoral degree.

1. Comprehensive Exam - Establishes doctoral candidacy and shows that the student has acquired the essential knowledge

and skills covered in each of the courses, not including dissertation courses, leading to the Doctor of Business Administration degree. Proficiency is demonstrated through essay responses that cover the essential content the doctoral program.

2. Concept Paper - The concepts and procedures necessary to prepare a dissertation concept paper at Columbia Southern University. A Concept Paper template is provided to assist the learner in creating the project.
3. Methodology/Ethics – This course will provide instruction on how to demonstrate professionalism in research techniques while assisting students with compliance with ethics standards.
4. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application—The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee that has been formed to monitor and review the research as proposed by students in their dissertations with regards to the study on human subjects. Students will work with their committee Chair to seek IRB approval for their methodology before they can move on to enroll in DBA 9306C. No data may be collected until IRB approval is obtained. Failure to observe this rule may result in the student's status as a doctoral candidate being terminated and him/her being dismissed from Columbia Southern University's DBA program.
5. Proposal—This course presents the procedures that are necessary to prepare a proposal. The proposal is the third in a sequence of dissertation documents including preparation of the concept, methodology/ethics, proposal, and the manuscript. A Proposal Template assists the learner in developing the content for this phase.
6. Manuscript—This course presents the procedures that are necessary to prepare a manuscript. It will cover research findings, conclusions, recommendations, tables, and figures and all that is included in a dissertation. A Dissertation Template assists in the presentation of the research.
7. Defense—Establishes and presents the procedures that are necessary to defend the dissertation orally. The objectives of this step include:
   * Prepare and present a PowerPoint summary of the salient points of the dissertation.
   * Describe the purpose and significance of the research topic.
   * Explain the significance of previous research on the topic.
   * Critique the relevance and value of related literature.
   * Discuss the potential for follow-on research on the topic.
   * Respond to all the questions posed by the Dissertation Committee.

Columbia Southern University must ensure that their program outcomes meet quality standards in order to protect their accreditation. To that end, below are steps of the Dissertation Milestone Review Process designed to facilitate Learner progress through the Dissertation process.

4.3 Concept Paper

The Concept Paper is a "pre-proposal" or abbreviated proposal. Approval of your Concept Paper indicates that your research topic and problem are acceptable and grounded in recent and key research on your topic.

A Concept Paper must:

- Have problem and Purpose Statements and Research Questions in near final format that will assist in strengthening your research efforts;
- Contain an articulated but not final research design;
- Offer an explanation of how the study will contribute to theory or practice;
- Follow proper APA formatting as outlined; and
- Follow the CSU template provided

Your DBA Chair and committee member requests for revision only help your paper be stronger. If your Chair and committee members request that you complete revisions to your concept paper, do not push to move on. Your work is ready when it is the best it can be, regardless of course end dates, finances, or professional or personal issues.

4.4 Research Methodology

The next assessment of your work considers your proposed research methodology. This is where you will choose a research design for your study. You will consider various methodologies and select the combination of techniques that is most appropriate for your study. You may choose to do a qualitative study or a quantitative study. If you choose a qualitative research design, you may select a case study, an ethnographic study, a phenomenological study, a grounded theory study, or perhaps content analysis. For quantitative studies, you may be interested in correlation analysis or survey research. In any event, before you can begin research, your methodology must first be approved by your Dissertation/Project Committee and then be presented to the University's Institutional Review Board. You cannot begin data collection until you have the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

4.5 The IRB Application

No data may be collected until IRB approval is obtained. Failure to observe this rule may result in the student's status as a doctoral candidate being terminated and him/her being dismissed from Columbia Southern University's DBA program.

Failure to obtain IRB approval before any data collection (for dissertation research, a pilot study, or pilot testing of data collection methods) may result in the immediate dismissal from the University of the party or parties involved. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee that has been formed to monitor and review the research as proposed by students in their dissertations with regards to the study on human subjects. Students will work with their committee Chair to seek IRB approval for their methodology before they can move on to enroll in the next course.

At Columbia Southern University the Institutional Review Board (IRB) scrutinizes all proposed research, conducted under the auspices of the University. The IRB is composed of permanent and temporary members. Permanent members include the DBA Program Director. Temporary members include the Chair of the student's Dissertation/Project Committee, and a professor on the University's graduate faculty that is knowledgeable in the topic of the student's research. Upon the request of the Chair of your Dissertation/Project Committee, the IRB Committee will meet

to evaluate the student's proposed research methodology and all supporting materials such as questionnaires and consent forms.

The student will submit a copy of their draft of the informed consent (See template and resources in the Student Success Center) their IRB Application (See template and resources in the Student Success Center) to their chair. Once approved by the Chair, the chair will then email these documents to the Chair of the IRB at dba@columbiasouthern.edu. If the IRB does not approve the methodology in the first revision, the chair will work with the student to complete changes and revisions and then resubmit with tracked changes. Once the IRB approves the methodology, the IRB Chair will then submit an approval form (See template and resources in the Student Success Center) to the Committee Chair for record. The Committee Chair will contact the student and then assist them with moving forward in their next course.

** Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information there.*

4.6 Charge of the IRB

Upon receipt of the approved Methodology, and informed consent materials from the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee, the IRB will review the proposed methods of study. The IRB will determine if the following criteria have been met:

1. All risks to the subjects should be minimized. The IRB will want to assure that the student's study will not expose participants to undue physical or psychological harm. As a rule, the risk involved in participating in a study should not be greater than the risks of normal day-to-day living.
2. The risks to the subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits and the importance of knowledge that may reasonably be expected to results from the study. In cases where the nature of the study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, participants should know ahead of time, and any necessary debriefing should follow immediately after their participation.
3. Informed consent is obtained from each prospective subject (see templates and examples in the Student Success Center). Participants should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and are to be given the choice of either participating or not participating. In addition, participants should be told if they agree to participate, that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants involved in the study are required to sign an Informed Consent form. The Informed Consent form contains the following information:
   * A brief description of the nature of the study.
   * A description of what participation will involve in terms of activities and duration.
   * A statement indicating that participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time without penalty.
   * A list of any potential risks and/or discomfort that participants may encounter.
   * The guarantee that all responses will remain confidential and anonymous.
   * The researcher's name, and contact information.
   * An offer to provide detailed information about the study (e.g. a summary of findings) upon completion.
   * A place for the participant to sign and date the letter, indicating agreement to participate. If children are involved in the study, their parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign and date the letter in their behalf.
   * For electronic surveys, see the alternate consent form wording that can be used in lieu of collecting signatures for participants that do not fall into a protected class. See the Student Success Center or Appendix D of this handbook for additional IRB information.
4. There are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and confidentiality of data. Under no circumstance should a study report, either orally or in writing, be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved in the study.

4.7 Authority of the IRB

If the proposed research study is approved without modification, the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee will notify you that research can begin immediately. If the committee requires additional information or modifications to the proposed methods of study, the research cannot begin until the changes are made and the methodology meets IRB requirements. The IRB may postpone review of the methodology if substantial revisions are required. If a project is disapproved, the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee will be notified in writing of the reasons for rejection.

The IRB has authority to suspend or terminate research that is not being conducted in accordance with IRB decisions, conclusions, or requirements, or that has resulted in unexpected serious harm to participants. In addition, if the study methodology is changed, after it has been approved by the IRB, the revised design is subject to review by the IRB. The decision as to whether the revised methodology has to be reviewed by the IRB will be made by the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee based on the nature of the revision and the potential harm to participants or to the University. For additional IRB information, refer to the Student Success Center.

4.8 The Dissertation Proposal

The next assessment of your work considers your proposal. In this assessment, each member of your Dissertation/Project Committee completes the Assessment of Dissertation Proposal form. By completing the form, each committee member will either accept or reject your proposal (see forms and templates in the Student Success Center). You will receive written comments from your committee chair indicating any changes that need be made. This information will be valuable to you as you proceed to the next phase of your study.

Your dissertation proposal will build on your concept paper. The difference between them is that the dissertation proposal has a more comprehensive literature review, a detailed account of the theoretical or applied contribution your study will make and a much more detailed method description.

Dissertation (Track 1 only)

The fifth assessment of your work by your Dissertation Committee considers your manuscript developed in alignment with a template. This is a detailed chapter-by-chapter assessment to determine if the following attributes are inadequate, adequate, or outstanding:

- Writing style and composition.
- Organization and form.
- Knowledge and use of related literature.
- Research design.
- Methodology.
- Hypotheses or research questions.
- Use of research tools.
- Depth of analysis and findings.
- Conclusions and recommendations.
- Contribution of new knowledge.

Upon completing their assessment, each member of the Dissertation Committee will complete the Assessment of Dissertation form and submit the results to the chair of your committee. In completing the assessment form, each committee member will have taken one of four positions.

- Accept the dissertation without revision.
- Accept the dissertation with minor revisions as specified.
- Accept the dissertation with substantial revisions as specified that would require review and approval of the Dissertation Committee.
- Reject the dissertation in accordance with written concerns.

This assessment will be given near the end of DBA 9306D and before you can schedule your oral defense. The chair will discuss the results of each assessment with you.

**Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information and resources there.*

Project Report (Track 2 only)
The next assessment of your work by your Project Committee occurs near the end of DBA 9406B Methodology/Ethics. This is a detailed assessment to verify that the following attributes are inadequate, adequate, or outstanding:

- Writing style and composition.
- Organization and form.
- Knowledge and use of related literature.
- Study design.
- Methodology.
- Study questions.
- Use of research tools and techniques.
- Depth of analysis and findings.
- Conclusions and recommendations.

Upon completing their assessment each member of the Project Committee will complete the Assessment of Dissertation or Project Report (see Student Success Center) and submit the results to the chair of your committee. In completing the assessment, each member will take one of four positions:

- Accept the project report without revision.
- Accept the project report with minor revisions as specified.
- Accept the project report with substantial revisions as specified that would require review and approval of the Project Committee.
- Reject the project report in accordance with written concerns.

The chair will discuss the results of the assessment with you. This assessment will be given near the end of DBA 9406D before you can schedule your oral defense.

4.9 Oral Defense
The last assessment of your work (Tracks 1 & 2) is the oral defense. This assessment will concentrate on your:

- Statement of the study question(s).
- Review of the most relevant literature.
- Definition of uncommon terms.
- Description of methodology or study techniques.
- Description of limitation of the study.
- Discussion of findings.
- Concluding remarks and recommendations.
- General understanding of topic of study.
- Response to questions.
- Professionalism.

Each committee member will complete the Assessment of Oral Defense form and submit their finding to the Chair of the Dissertation/Project Committee. During the oral defense, concerns may arise over information presented in the dissertation or project report. Your committee chair, in consultation with members of the committee will consider all aspects of your dissertation or project report to decide on a course of action. Normally at this point, there should be no problem; however, it is possible that you will be required to change a portion of your dissertation or project report and/or present another oral defense. If this should occur, your committee chair will inform you of what action is required at the conclusion of the oral defense.

5.0 The Dissertation/Research Project Manuscript
5.1 The Components of a Dissertation Proposal and Manuscript
A Dissertation Proposal consists of the Title Page through Chapter 3, written in the future tense. Once the research has been completed, chapters 4 and 5 are added and the first three chapters are edited to past tense. Follow the Dissertation Template to complete the manuscript. The main sections are:

- The preliminary pages that include the Title Page, Abstract, and Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures, as well as other front matter. (see Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study, which provides a brief overview and introduces background information, the problem statement, and other information (see Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- Chapter 2: Literature Review, which provides the foundational theories related to your research and related research conducted within the last 5 years. The literature provides the basis for the need to study the topic presented. The research question should not be one that can already be answered by reading past studies, but should build on that work. (See Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- Chapter 3: Methodology describes the techniques of used in the study in a manner that would allow another researcher to duplicate it. That is, any other competent researcher should be able to take your Problem Statement and by collecting data under the same circumstances and within the same parameters, obtain results comparable to those you obtained. (See Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis describes the results of your study. You will start with an overview, followed by the actual findings, and concluding with the analysis and

evaluation of results. This discussion will set the stage for the final chapter. (See Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions will tie everything together and show the relationship between the problem statement, literature review, and findings. In addition, you will make recommendations for future research (See Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).
- References and Appendices will complete the manuscript. (See Dissertation Template in the Student Success Center).

**Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information and resources there.*

6.0 Preparing the Dissertation or Research Project

Required Style Guide

The latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association is the required style guide for the preparation of all dissertations or project reports at Columbia Southern University. If situations arise where information provided in this Dissertation/Project Handbook differ from material provided in the APA Manual, the Dissertation/Project Handbook takes precedence.

Formatting the Final Document

- Font and File Requirement
  - Material will be prepared using Times New Roman, 12-point typeface. All work must be done on a word processor and saved in an MS Word file. The text portion of the dissertation should be typed in 12-point font. Headings and sub-heading cannot use a different size font. Tables, charts, figures and appendices may not use a different size font. Boldface and italics may be used where appropriate per APA guidelines.
- Spacing
  - Text should be double spaced. Headings can range from 1 to 5 levels. The placement of heading and subheadings, and their spacing with the text, will depend on the number of levels of headings. Examples are provided in the APA Manual.
  - All pages of text should be full pages. The only exception is if the page is the last page of a chapter. Page breaks should not be inserted between headings or before figures and tables. Each chapter should start on a new page.
- Margins
  - A 1.5-inch margin should be left on the left side of every page. All other margins should be 1.0 inch.
- Pagination
  - Preliminary pages will be numbered with lower-case Roman numbers placed at the top right of each page. The title page is not numbered. The first page to be numbered will be the dedication page if it is used (v). See the Dissertation Template. Lower-case Roman numbers will used consecutively up to, but not including the text. The first page of Chapter 1 will be numbered Arabic 1 at the top right of the page. Consecutive Arabic page numbers will continue to be placed at the top right of each page throughout the document. The document shall contain no blank pages.
- Arrangement of Contents
  - The arrangement of the contents of the dissertation or project report is prescribed in the dissertation template.

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7.0 The Oral Examination

All doctoral programs require Learners to pass a traditional oral examination, which is called a "Dissertation Defense".

7.1 Examination Proctor Policy

Final examinations, including the oral defense, are to be administered to students by an approved proctor on a date that is mutually convenient for all parties on the call. Please refer to the Columbia Southern University Student Handbook for the Proctor Policy, Responsibilities, and Procedures.

7.2 Oral Defense

Once the student enrolls into DBA 9410 or DBA 9510 he/she will work with their Chair to draft their Power Point presentation for their defense. The Chair will then work with the student to ensure that the DBA Program Director successfully approves their presentation and Manuscript before the defense. The student will then have the Chair of their DBA Committee contact (in writing) the Graduate Academic Coordinator to schedule their defense. The defense will be completed off-site through telecommunication efforts to include the use of (but not limited to) GoToMeetings, Adobe Connect sessions, teleconferences, etc. Once contacted, the Graduate Academic Coordinator will then schedule your defense to include the members of your committee, your committee Chair, your Academic Advisor, and your Proctor.

7.3 Finalization of Documents after Oral Defense

- Copyright Release Agreement: If you choose to copyright your work, the University requests that you release the copyright for the University's Academic use. Students must submit a copy of the Copyright Release Agreement to CSU at dba@columbiasouthern.edu. Once on file, the student's dissertation or Research Project will be published in the CSU Online Library.

- Title Page: The title page should follow the dissertation template and the title of your dissertation, your name, the University's name, and the date. See the Dissertation Template.

- Approval: The approval page requires the typed name, date, and signature of each committee member. Signatures are to be in black ink. You need to provide two approval pages for each signature, one for each copy of your dissertation or project report.

**Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information and resources there.*

Appendix A: Selection of a Dissertation Topic

How do you select a dissertation topic? Your dissertation topic must be defined in relationship to current and key studies in your field, and reading many studies is the only way to find an acceptable topic, ideally one you are very excited about. Read as many literature reviews as you can find regarding your topic. Look at the implications for future research sections of empirical studies and at the end of dissertations on your topic. If your question can be answered by reading existing research, then it is not a suitable topic.

Look for issues, and debates in the area. Look for a topic that addresses a question in the literature or extends a line of research. Reading widely in your field will help you better understand how to do research and provide ideas for a research design. Ideally, you begin the process of finding a topic early in your graduate studies, so that producing a dissertation is a seamless transition from work you have been doing for years!

Students may feel that arriving at a suitable dissertation idea is a frustrating process. However, this is often just how the process of finding a topic goes. A well-defined dissertation idea is important in avoiding unnecessary difficulties later.

Your dissertation will be a competent piece of research that fits within a lineage of investigations in your area of specialization. Your research can be compared to the final piece of work that artisans produce in order to be admitted to their guild. No one expects the work to change history, but it is must reveal a high level of proficiency, knowledge of a topic area, and a capacity for clear thinking. Your dissertation is your well-earned passport into postdoctoral professional life. Pick a topic that matters to you—research a question that you care about and that you desire to be known as an expert on. When students begin to research topics of personal significant interest, it is difficult to avoid bias, identify flaws, and accept critical scholarly feedback.

**Updated documents, templates, and processes are located in the Student Success Center. Always check for the newest information and resources there.*

Appendix B: The Doctoral Program Completion Checklist

- ☐ Satisfactory completion of all courses prior to the Comprehensive Examination with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00.
- ☐ Successful completion of the DBA 9101: Comprehensive Examination.
- ☐ Selection and approval of Doctoral Committee Chair and Doctoral Committee Members.
- ☐ Completion of all courses within the DBA program to include all course within the dissertation or research project phase.
- ☐ Approval of the Concept Paper (requires both Committee and the university Academic Quality Review approval.*).
- ☐ Approval of the Proposal (requires Committee approval.*).
- ☐ IRB Application Approval
- ☐ Approval of Dissertation Manuscript (requires both Committee and university Academic Quality Review approval, as well as a review by the Office of the Provost*).
- ☐ Oral Examination
- ☐ Submission of final manuscript for publication to the Program Director for the
- ☐ DBA Program*.
- ☐ Successful petition for graduation through the Registrar's office at CSU

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Appendix C: Guidelines for Assessing Proposals, Dissertations, or Project Reports

General guidelines for assessing proposals, dissertations, or project reports, plus detailed guidelines for assessing the oral defense follow. You should become familiar with these guidelines since they will be used by the members of your Dissertation/ Project Committee to assess your work.

NOTE: Assessment of the proposal only applies to Track 1. Track 2 will have to meet these objectives in the manuscript.

A Central Theme for Assessment

1. Is the purpose for the study stated early in the document and is the purpose a consistent central theme throughout the document?
2. Does the introduction to the study or the literature survey clearly and explicitly identify the central theme within a body of relevant theory?
3. Does the literature review show the proposed dissertation or project report to be an extension of or verification of existing knowledge?

Researchable Questions and Ideas

1. Are the study questions or hypotheses realistic? That is, can the study questions be answered on an empirical basis? Can the hypotheses be tested by empirical data?
2. Are the ideas testable? That is, can the assertions be falsified by logic, data, or experiment?
3. Are the study questions or hypotheses specific enough to be investigated?
4. Are the variables under investigation and the nature of the relationship among variables clearly and correctly stated?
5. Can the study questions or hypotheses be referred either directly or indirectly to observable, empirical events?
6. Do the variables stated in the study questions or hypotheses refer to a set of internally consistent observations or propositions that are capable of being defined operationally and objectively?
7. Does the introduction and literature review lead logically and consistently to the specific study questions posed or the hypotheses presented?

Significance of the Study

1. Are the possible findings of the study likely to make a difference in theory, in the results of other studies, or in practical matters?
2. In the light of current knowledge, does the study deal with a question or hypothesis that is likely to carry the investigation forward?
3. Are there other questions that should have been investigated before the problem in this study was confronted?

Review of the Literature

1. Is the review comprehensive and thorough?
2. Does the review of literature follow some kind of thematic progression?
3. Does the review yield new insights to justify the study?
4. Are the majority of citations from work that has been documented in the past five years?

Strategy of the Proposed Investigation (Track 1 only)

1. Is the appropriate overall strategy for the investigation evident?
2. Is the method a clear-cut, logical extension of the central theme of the study?
3. Can the method reasonably be expected to bring forth information that will answer the study questions posed?
4. Do the methodological procedures, such as how an independent variable is manipulated, or how the dependent variable is measured, or the ways in which an intervention is used, provide a valid test of the study questions or hypotheses?
5. Is the method practical, given the actual situational constraints within which the study is conducted? Have the availability of subjects, the amount of time required for observations, the cost of the procedures, and other aspects of the real world been considered? That is, can the researcher be expected to accomplish the procedures proposed?
6. Does the researcher have sufficient knowledge to carry out the proposed procedures?

The Population and Sample

1. Are the pertinent characteristics of the study population clearly stated?
2. Is the size of the sample appropriate? In deciding on sample size, have relevant issues been considered: i.e., the probable variability among subjects in the sample and the amount of variance likely to be accounted for by the variables under consideration?
3. Are appropriate methods of randomization and control used in selecting the sample?
4. Is the sample adequately described?
5. Are the subjects used in the study appropriate for the study?

Reliability and Validity of Measure

1. Is there sufficient evidence of the reliability of the instruments or observations used in the study?
2. Is there evidence of validity of every instrument used? If the instrument has been used in previous work, is evidence of its validity provided? If the instrument is developed for this specific study, is evidence of its validity obtained?
3. Are the measures or instruments chosen the best that are available for this study?

Specificity of Methods and Operational Definitions

1. Is the study procedure spelled out in sufficient step-by-step detail so that a modestly trained researcher could repeat the research?
2. If there are alternatives in any phase of the procedure, are the methods of making decisions explicit?
3. Is there adequate evidence that an experimental design or phenomenological observation will adequately address the research question? That is, has the technique been used previously with success, or has the researcher shown results from a pilot study or other convincing information?
4. In a phenomenological study, have all the angles from which the phenomenon could be approached been considered and translated into appropriate investigative procedures?

Controls in the Study Process

1. In experimental and quasi-experimental studies, are the controls in the research procedure adequate, appropriate, and clearly specified?
2. Has the researcher taken into account any "incidental" features of the procedure that might bias the results and contaminate the interpretation of the data?
3. Does the plan of study take into account the subjects' possible expectations, mind sets and interpretations of the study procedure?
4. Has the researcher taken into account the possible influence of the subjects own wishes and expectations?

Ethical Considerations

1. Has the study methodology been approved by the IRB?
2. Has the researcher followed the guidelines about informed consent?
3. Are the proposed informed consent form(s) satisfactory?

Appropriateness of Statistical Description and Analysis

1. If necessary for the study, is the statistical description and analysis of results appropriate and explicit?
2. When appropriate, are alternative ways of analyzing the data suggested?
3. Are the assumptions underlying the statistical analysis recognized, and is the data likely to meet these assumptions? Is the researcher aware of possible problems in the statistical analysis?
4. At each step in the study, as in determining the size of the sample, for instance, or in constructing the research design, have the appropriate statistical considerations been taken into account?

Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

1. Are provisions made to interpret the various possible results? Have the results been appropriately interpreted?
2. Are provisions made to integrate the findings with previous studies and theories?
3. Can negative results be interpreted so as to contribute to knowledge in the field? Would negative results make a difference in the area of investigation, in theory or in practice?
4. Have areas of future inquiry been clearly articulated?

Clarity and Logic of the Presentation

1. Are the documents written as simply and clearly as possible?
2. Are the documents organized in accord with the recommended format presented in this Handbook?
3. Is there an adequate balance of conciseness and elaboration, repetition of major points, and useful summaries?
4. Are the documents visually pleasing, and does their visual structure assist in conveying a logical structure?

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Institutional Review Board

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Columbia Southern University (CSU) is an accredited member of the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). The Accrediting Commission of DETC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency. All CSU programs have been reviewed and approved by DETC.

1.0 Introduction

The National Research Act, passed by Congress in 1974, established the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (herein, the Commission). The purpose of the Commission is to ensure that the rights and well-being of human subjects involved in research are protected. Therefore, any institution that engages in or supports research must establish an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the purpose of approving and monitoring research according to Federal Policy such that human subjects are protected during all phases of the research process.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), through its Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP), is tasked with providing guidelines, education, and registration of an IRB (United States Department, 2006). The IRB at Columbia Southern University (herein, CSU) assures that the CSU community of researchers abides by the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46 (herein, Federal Policy) and is therefore eligible to apply for and potentially conduct federally funded research on human subjects.

2.0 Overview of the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

This document provides information regarding the process and the charge of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as relating to human subjects research. The IRB defines the processes and the policies of the information that is intended for use by investigators, researchers, Institutional Review Board Members and members of other committees who are involved in research regarding human subjects within the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Columbia Southern University (CSU). CSU has a role in ensuring compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations and the policies as designated in this handbook. The IRBs have a central role in ensuring that non-exempt human subject research is planned and conducted in an ethical manner, and in compliance with federal and state regulations.

Each member of the CSU community who is involved in the conduct of research has a responsible role in ensuring adherence to federal regulations and state laws pertaining to human subject research, and to the requirements of this policy and the specific requirements of the IRB. Before any non-exempt research project involving human subjects is initiated, it must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). While the principal investigator (the student) has the immediate and primary responsibility for protecting research subjects by following the approved research protocol procedures, the CSU IRB is responsible for ensuring that the research plan and the ongoing conduct of the research adequately protect the rights and welfare of study participants. Through this policy and the oversight of the IRB, the University has promised to be accountable for establishing and following these guidelines for the use of human subjects in research.

3.0 Terms

A. Code of Federal Regulations

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP)

B. Title 45—Public Welfare

C. Part 46—Protection of Human Subjects

- Subpart A: Federal policy for the protection of human subjects
- Subpart B: Additional DHHS protections for pregnant women, human fetuses, and neonates involved in research
- Subpart C: Additional DHHS protections pertaining to biomedical and behavioral research involving prisoners as subjects
- Subpart D: Additional DHHS protections for children involved as subjects in research (United States Department, 2005)

4.0 The Institutional Review Board at CSU

The IRB at CSU bases its goals on the following: 1) to protect human subjects, 2) to develop and maintain an ethical research environment at CSU, 3) to assure that researchers are qualified to conduct research, and 4) to assure that the research has the potential to add value to the academic community and society.

5.0 Composition, and Membership Requirements

The IRB of CSU is composed of one appointed full-time faculty member who shall reside as the Program Director of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at CSU. The Program Director of the DBA program serves as the Chair and is responsible for impartial management of the IRB. The IRB board members shall include one Program Director from each discipline from the programs at CSU.

The Provost of the University is a non-voting member who enforces institutional responsibility for the IRB. The Board is represented by faculty members who have graduate research experience. At least one member of the IRB must have scientific academic interests and at least one member must have non-scientific academic interests. All IRB members will complete the CITI training for IRB members. The IRB Chair is responsible for reporting IRB membership information to the Provost of CSU.

6.0 Responsibilities and Jurisdiction

The IRB has three primary responsibilities: 1) to provide continuous quality improvement within the DBA program, 2) to review and approve research proposals that involve human subjects, and 3) to monitor ongoing research that involves human subjects. The IRB is responsible for continuous quality improvement via self-evaluation. The results of this evaluation as well as a summary of the activities of the year are submitted in an annual report to the Provost in June of each year.

The research proposal review and approval process is detailed elsewhere in this handbook. All determinations are based on Federal Policy, and the institution's policies. The IRB determinations are based on whether proposed research is

indeed research, and whether the human subjects involved in the research are adequately protected.

The IRB members may not vote on and/or oversee research in which they are personally or professionally involved. For example, a board member must abstain from making any decisions on a research proposal submitted by a relative or if the research in any way provides any benefit or detriment to the board member.

7.0 Records Retention

All IRB activities are documented and all records relating to the normal activity of the IRB are maintained within the students file at CSU. Documentation relating to specific research is maintained for a minimum of three years after the research concludes. Researchers must reapply for IRB approval if their application has expired as indicated by the timeline delineated elsewhere in this handbook. The required IRB documentation includes but is not limited to the following:

- Policy recommendations, policy adoptions, and related procedural changes
- All research proposals and supporting or sample documents
- Action regarding all research proposals
- Progress reports submitted by investigators
- Copies of all correspondence with investigators and others
- Copies of researcher's correspondence with subjects
- Statements of significant findings provided to subjects
- CITI Training records

8.0 Internal Auditing

The IRB at CSU is responsible for reporting annually to the Provost all research activities using human subjects that are affiliated with CSU. The annual report identifies all academic programs in which curriculum-based research assignments using human subjects are used and confirms whether the activities are on file with the IRB. The report identifies all ongoing research and includes approval dates, review cycles, and any updates and outcomes of the research projects. In the event unauthorized research is identified, an official letter to cease and desist all research will be sent to the primary researcher and to the Program Director of the appropriate college until an application has been submitted to, reviewed by, and approved by the IRB. The annual report provides the records and activities of IRB members and conveys to the appropriate Program Director of each college these data on each IRB member.

9.0 Privacy Issues in Research

Two privacy issues must be considered in research. The first consideration is confidentiality - protecting the identity of the subject who voluntarily provided private information for the research. This issue is handled in the research design of a project. The second issue is that of invasion of privacy - accessing personal information about the individual without expressed permission or consent. Acquisition of private information must follow all legal standards and procedures. Invasion of privacy, per se, for purposes of research is acceptable either in a public, non-manipulated situation such that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy and/or when the research question is of sufficient importance that such an intrusion may be justified.

10.0 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a critical component in preserving the rights of human subjects involved or participating in research and should be considered an ongoing process. Prospective human participants must be given sufficient information about the research procedure, its purpose, any risk or benefit of participating, any therapeutic procedural alternatives, and the opportunity to ask questions or withdraw from the study without bias or penalty. Investigators must ascertain whether the individual has sufficient comprehension of the information to make responsible decisions about their participation in the research. The conditions under which the decision to participate is made must be free of coercion and/or undue influence such that the decision to participate is strictly voluntary. Any information obtained during the course of the research that may influence a subject's decision to continue participating in the research must be provided to the subject immediately.

Signing the informed consent document or otherwise acknowledging informed consent does not waive the participant's legal rights. However, signing and/or acknowledgment of informed consent is verification that the participant was not coerced or was subject to undue influence by the researcher (institution/sponsor) to participate in the research.

Informed consent guidelines, checklist and example templates can be found in the Student Success Center.

Informed Consent Checklist

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/consentckls.html

Informed Consent, Legally Effective and Prospectively Obtained

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/hsdc93-03.html

Informed Consent, Non-English Speakers

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/ic-non-e.html

- Securing Informed Consent
  Research, particularly research in which the participant is at more than minimal risk, requires that the participant provide informed consent to participate. The participant must receive a copy of the signed document and the researcher must keep the original on file for a minimum of three years after the completion of the research. In cases in which the participant is at minimal risk, the IRB may approve an informed consent that is modified. Informed consent may be signified by the fact that the subject provides the requested data. For example, in the case of survey research, the researcher may state in the invitation to participate that by virtue of completing the survey, the subject was informed of the research and is providing informed consent to participate in the research. In cases where there is only oral communication with the subject, an IRB approved written script must be followed, and the subject or a witness representing the subject must sign

the copy of the summary verifying that sufficient information was appropriately conveyed to the subject and that the subject adequately comprehended the information.

- Exceptions to the Standard Informed Consent
  The IRB may waive and/or alter some of the requirements set forth in the Informed Consent Form if the following two conditions are met:
  * The study is conducted by or is subject to the approval of state or local government officials because the research is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine these points:
  * Public benefits or service programs;
  * Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs;
  * Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
  * Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits of services under those programs;
  * The study could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration.
  * In order to grant a waiver of any of the conditions of informed consent or to modify any of the elements of the informed consent, the IRB must determine and document that all of the following conditions are met:
  * The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects, and subjects cannot be individually identified by the data;
  * The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects;
  * The research cannot be practicably carried out without the waiver or alteration;
  * Whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information (debriefed) after participation.

- Other considerations for informed consent waiver include the following:
  * Review of records of deceased individuals;
  * Preliminary review of records in which information is not considered sensitive (e.g., sexual orientation, criminal history, socially stigmatized diseases);
  * Review of records for which the investigator has devised procedures to protect the confidentiality of information such that the only link between the subject and the research is the informed consent.
  * Research may not be conducted if more than minimal risk is involved and if, prior to the start of the research, information is not provided to the subject that is material to a subject's decision to participate.

- Informed Consent for Children: Assent
  In order for children to become subjects in a research study, they must assent or agree to participation. Children are defined as those who have not attained the legal age of consent under the applicable laws of the jurisdiction in which the research takes place. An Assent is a form of informed consent that must be signed by a parent or guardian of a child prior to the start of the research. Assent by a child to participate in research is not necessarily granted by virtue of the fact that the child may not object to being a subject in the study. The IRB must consider all factors (e.g., age, maturity, psychological status, etc.) of children involved in the study to determine the ability of these subjects to grant assent on their own behalf (National Institutes, 2005).

- Informed Consent for Cognitively Impaired Individuals: Assent
  Individuals with cognitive or intellectual impairment require special protections. Assent by these individuals is necessary but not sufficient to include them in a study; assent must also be provided by a legal representative of the cognitively impaired individual. The IRB will take into consideration the potential risk to these individuals and assent by the individual and legal representative. Guidelines for determining inclusion of cognitively impaired individuals and requirements for obtaining assent are described by the OHSR (National Institutes, 2005).

11.0 Risk/Benefit Analysis

The IRB evaluates risk of harm only when there is a condition associated with research on human subjects that make a situation dangerous, per se, beyond those risks ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine examinations or tests. The investigator is responsible for evaluating the research design and providing estimates of risk of harm and benefit based on previous research. Brutal or inhumane treatment is never justified in research, and minimal risk to personal or professional reputation or mental or physical health is justified only if it is necessary to achieve the research objective. The justification for risk in research is weighed by the external reviewer(s), and the decision to participate in approved research involving any risk falls solely to the human subject. Significant risk must be extensively justified in terms of benefit to the subject and maintaining voluntary participation by the subject. The appropriateness of including vulnerable populations, those who may be more susceptible to mental, emotional, or physical manipulation because of condition or social status, must be determined. These risks and/or benefits must be included in the informed consent.

11.1 Periodic Review of Risk/Benefit Ratio

Upon review of proposed research, the IRB must consider the following:

1. Identify risks to the subject associated with the research;
2. Determine that risks will be minimized;
3. Identify benefits to the subject and/or to society derived from the research;
4. Determine that the risks are reasonable in relation to benefits to the subject and/or society;
5. Assure that informed consent is accurate and complete;
6. Determine intervals of periodic review and any provisions for monitoring data collected based on risks to human subjects.

Period reviews must occur at least once per year and may be more frequent depending on the degree of risk to subjects. Periodic review has the purpose of determining any shift in the risk/benefit ratio and to determine whether any new information is to be provided to subjects that may influence their decision to continue participating in the research. The researcher is responsible for reporting any shift in the risk/benefit ratio or any significant findings to the IRB between periodic reviews.

12.0 Selection of Subjects

Researchers must use objective and unbiased strategies for selecting individuals to participate as subjects in research. Selection must be equitable such that diversity on any level (e.g., race, sexual orientation, gender, economic status, etc.) is not a consideration for participation unless the research is designed expressly and appropriately to address questions about specific groups. Assignment to experimental and/or control groups must be random. Compensation for participation in the form of but not limited to payment or free services or treatments cannot be excessive such that it poses undue enticement or incentive for the prospective subject to participate in the research. No monetary or other inducements or compensations may be offered to pregnant women to terminate the pregnancy, whether an abortion is anticipated or not, for the purposes of research.

13.0 Review Categories for Research Proposals

All research proposals and projects involving human subjects, whether as a part of the established curriculum for a course or to be implemented by an individual researcher, must be submitted to the IRB. In some cases, the only action by the IRB will be to file the description of the proposed work. In other cases, full review and approval by the IRB are required. The course of action is determined by the category in which the research falls.

There are two broad review categories for research approval: nonexempt and exempt. Within the nonexempt category, review of research proposals may be expedited or require full review. Nonexempt research protocols may not be implemented without review and recommendation to approve by the full IRB or an appointed IRB reviewer in the case of expedited reviews. Research proposals falling under the exempt category are not reviewed but are filed by the IRB. Note that ad hoc IRB approval to conduct research will not be granted. The classification criteria shown below serve as guidelines for categorizing research proposals as exempt, expedited, or requiring full review. Guidelines for review categories follow those of the Federal Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, and Office for Protection from Research Risks.

13.1 Exempt from Review

Research protocols that are exempt from review for approval must be on file with the IRB. The Chair of the IRB will determine whether protocols submitted to the IRB qualify to be exempt from review. For a research project to be exempt from human subjects review, all items in Part A, AND at least one item in Part B, MUST apply.

Part A (all items must apply)

1. The research does not involve as subjects prisoners, fetuses, pregnant women, the seriously ill, or mentally or cognitively compromised adults.
2. The research does not involve the collection or recording of behavior which, if known outside the research, could reasonably place subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, be stigmatizing, or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation.
3. The research does not involve the collection of information regarding sensitive aspects of subjects' behavior (e.g., drug or alcohol use, illegal conduct, sexual behavior).
4. The research does not involve subjects under the age of 18 (Exception: Research with subjects under the age of 18 may still be considered exempt if the subjects are participating in projects that fall under categories 1, 3, 4, and/or 5 in Part B). Studies under Part B-2 that include minors should be submitted for expedited review.
5. The research does not involve deception.
6. The procedures of this research are generally free of foreseeable risk to the subject.
7. The research does not require a waiver from informed consent procedures.

Part B. (at least one item must apply)

1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings that use normal educational practices, such as
   * Research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or
   * Research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior in which
   * Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and
   * Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior in which
   * The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office, or
   * The confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter, without exception, according to federal statute(s) requirements.
4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
5. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of public department heads or public agency heads and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine
   * Public benefit or service programs,
   * Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs,
   * Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures, or

* Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies
   * If wholesome foods without additives are consumed or
   * If a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient, an agricultural chemical, or environmental contaminant at or below the level determined to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (National Institutes, 2005).

13.2 Expedited Review

Expedited review is appropriate for research protocols involving no more than minimal risk or when minor changes occur in research protocols that were approved within the last year. The IRB Chair or an appointed IRB member reviews the research proposal. For a research project to be eligible for expedited review, all items in Part A, AND at least one item in Part B MUST apply.

Part A (all items must apply)

1. The research does not involve as subjects pregnant women, fetuses, prisoners, the seriously ill, or mentally or cognitively compromised adults.
2. The research does not involve the collection or recording of behavior which, if known outside the research, could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, be stigmatizing, or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation.
3. The research does not involve the collection of information regarding sensitive aspects of the subjects' behavior (e.g., drug or alcohol use, illegal conduct, sexual behavior).
4. The procedures of this research present no more than minimal risk to the subject. ("Minimal risk" means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.)

Part B (at least one item must apply)

1. Research involving existing identifiable data, documents, records, or biological specimens (including pathological or diagnostic specimens), where these materials, in their entirety, have been collected or will be collected solely for non-research purposes. [NOTE: These sources are not publicly available and, although confidentiality will be strictly maintained, information will not be recorded anonymously (e.g., use will be made of audio-or-video-tapes, names will be recorded, even if they are not directly associated with the data).]
2. Collection of data through use of the following procedures: a) non-invasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves; b) physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy; c) weighing, testing sensory acuity, electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, echography, sonography, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography; d) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight and health of the individual.
3. Collection of data from voice, video, digital or image recordings made for research purposes where identification of the subjects and/or their responses would not reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
4. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research involving perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior, or research employing surveys, interviews, oral history, focus groups, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies).
5. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior. [NOTE: Although confidentiality will be strictly maintained, information will not be recorded anonymously (e.g., use will be made of audio-or videotapes, names will be recorded, even if they are not directly associated with the data).]
6. Research that involves mild deception. [NOTE: Deception must be scientifically justified and de-briefing procedures must be outlined in detail. Based upon the judgment of the reviewers, some protocols involving deception may qualify for expedited review. In other cases, the deception will be of sufficient consequence to require full IRB review. See description of Full IRB Review in Part C, below]
7. Prospective collection for research purposes of biological specimens; research on drugs or devices for which an investigational new drug exemption or an investigational device exemption is not required; collection of blood samples by finger stick or venipuncture.
8. Research previously approved by the convened IRB as follows: (a) where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or (b) where the research remains active only for the purposes of data analysis; or (c) where the IRB has determined that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and no additional risks have been identified; or (d) where no new subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified.

13.3 Full Review

All members of the IRB review research the proposals that require full review, and unanimous recommendation to approve the proposals is required prior to initiating the research protocol. Full review is required when the research involves more than a minimal risk to human subjects and/or involves members of protected classes. Changes in the conditions or protocols of research that gained IRB approval by full review within the last year must be reviewed for approval by the IRB.

Full IRB review is required if ANY of these apply to the proposed research:

1. The research involves prisoners, fetuses, pregnant women, the seriously ill, or mentally or cognitively compromised adults as subjects.
2. The research involves the collection or recording of behavior which, if known outside the research, could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, be stigmatizing,

or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation.

3. The research involves the collection of information regarding sensitive aspects of the subjects' behavior (e.g., drug or alcohol use, illegal conduct, sexual behavior).
4. The procedures of the research involve more than minimal risk to the subject. The risk may be actual or perceived. "More than minimal risk" means that the probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm or discomfort likely to be experienced in the proposed research is greater than that that ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.
5. Any research which does not fall into any of the categories explicitly identified as qualifying for exempt or expedited status.
6. The research involves deception, and the nature of the deception is considered of sufficient consequence to require consideration by the full IRB. Deception of lesser consequence may be eligible for expedited review (See Section 8.2). During each full IRB review, the committee members will consider whether the degree of risk to human subjects requires IRB review more frequently than once per year.

14.0 Protected Classes

For information on research with other protected groups, you may consult the Federal regulations or a member of the IRB. These protected classes include the following:

1. Pregnant women, human fetuses, and neonates;
2. Prisoners;
3. Children and minors (Children under 18 years);
4. Cognitively compromised individuals;
5. Students and employees.

Federal regulations provide higher standards of protection for individuals belonging to certain classes of research subjects, such as prisoners, the seriously ill, mentally or cognitively compromised adults, and minors (children under the age of 18). In the case of prisoners, there is concern that the coercive environment of a prison may compromise the inmate's voluntary participation. With other protected classes, the issue is the ability of the subjects to provide adequate, informed consent, either because of physical/cognitive limitations, school or work conditions, or because of age.

Excluding exempt research (e.g., naturalistic observation), all research with children requires signed consent forms from the parents or legal guardians. In addition, the child, if of sufficient age to be verbal, must give her/his own assent, or agreement to participate. Such assent must follow an explanation at a level appropriate to the individual's age, maturity, experience, and condition--of the procedures to be used, their meaning to the child in terms of discomfort and inconvenience, and the general purpose of the research. Children should be asked if they wish to participate in the research or not. Mere failure to object on the part of the child should not, in the absence of affirmative agreement, be construed as assent. In the proposal, the investigator should indicate: 1) how assent will be obtained (what the investigator will say to the child and whether or not the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be present); and 2) how assent will be documented. The child may either sign a very brief assent form or verbally indicate a willingness to participate. Whether assent is to be obtained verbally or in writing, a copy of the assent form must be submitted to the IRB with the proposal.

If the research is to be conducted in an institutional setting, the IRB also requires permission from an appropriate institutional official. Within a school system, the permission of a school superintendent or principal will be sufficient for research conducted in a public assembly or similar venue; research in a classroom, however, requires the additional permission of the classroom teacher.

15.0 Types of Research

15.1 Curriculum-based Research

Research as part of the curriculum of a course does not require IRB approval but the protocols must be on file with the IRB. For campus courses, instructors teaching the course are responsible for submitting the report; for online courses, the director of the curriculum development department is responsible for submitting the report. Course-based research does not include student teaching or internships.

Research activities or exercises conducted as part of curriculum for coursework are considered exempt from IRB review when the following criteria are met:

a. There is minimal risk, and
b. The planned classroom exercise does not involve members of vulnerable populations,
c. Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to subjects, and
d. The information will not be made public in the form of presentation or publication outside of the classroom or educational setting.

If curriculum-based research exceeds exempt status, an application for research approval must be submitted to the IRB, and approval must be obtained prior to the start of the course. Videotaping or photography, which identifies the participant, requires that the participant relinquish his or her anonymity and, thus, the research will not qualify for exempt status unless those individuals being videotaped or photographed are students enrolled in the course.

Some examples of assignments involving curriculum based research that must undergo IRB review:

- Internet surveys/postings
- Presentation at scientific meetings or conferences
- Research exhibitions with audiences that extend beyond members of the GCU academic community
- Master's theses, capstone projects or case studies
- Undergraduate honors' theses

Some examples of assignments involving curriculum based research that do not require IRB review:

- Classroom assignments involving human subject data where the objective of the activity is to teach proficiency in performing certain tasks or using specific tools or methods (as in a research methods course)
- Classroom assignments that exist solely to fulfill course requirements to train students in the use of particular method.

15.2 Institutional-based Research

The survey (or other tool), an informed consent, and the means by which the tool is administered must be on file with the IRB prior to conducting the research. Protocols do not need to be on file with the IRB as long as the research is absolutely anonymous and participation is entirely voluntary. Institutional research protocols do not need to be on file with the IRB if data are collected from existing databases or information banks in which the data are owned and managed by CSU.

Research protocols for marketing or institutional research purposes that exceed exempt status must be approved by the IRB. The responsible party must submit an expedited or full application for research approval to the IRB, and approval must be obtained prior to the start of the research.

15.3 Observational Research

Most observational research is exempt from Federal Policy regulations. However, observational research on adults must abide by the Federal Policy if data are collected in a manner that allows subjects to be identified directly or through identifiers or the subject would be placed at risk (emotional, physical, reputation, etc.) if the information collected from the observation became public. Observational research is not exempt if it involves children or minors unless the observations occur in a public situation and the researchers do not participate in any activities or manipulate the situation in any way.

15.4 Medical Records-based Research

The privacy of information about an individual is encountered when the research project involves accessing the subject's medical or other confidential records. Research that involves a human subject's medical records must comply with the regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1966. Researchers should contact the IRB for further information if research might be affected by HIPAA regulation.

15.5 Research in Foreign Countries

Research conducted outside of the United States by researchers affiliated with CSU must abide by the foreign country's regulations, and these regulations must be equivalent to or more stringent than those used in the United States. The IRB will make a final determination based on an examination of the regulations of the country in question and the regulations in force in the United States.

15.6 Grant-based Research

When a grant or contract to conduct research is awarded to CSU, a CSU researcher, or a CSU research team, the initial agreement may not specify how human subjects are involved. Though the grant or contract may be awarded on general terms, the IRB must approve the final research proposal before research commences.

16.0 IRB Approval for Research

All research conducted at CSU by researchers affiliated with CSU must meet the goals or objectives of the IRB listed elsewhere in this handbook, and CSU may use data in any appropriate manner once the data are published or made public by the researcher.

17.0 Criteria for Evaluation of Research Proposals

The researcher is responsible for demonstrating to the IRB that the research project can be exempt from review by the IRB. Criteria for exempt review are described elsewhere in this handbook. The IRB performs a more exhaustive evaluation of the research proposal when a research requires expedited or full review. The criteria for non-exempt review are described elsewhere in this handbook. It is not the purpose of a review by the IRB to comment on research protocol or design unless it has bearing on the risk to human subjects. Criteria used by the IRB to determine whether a research proposal is subject to expedited or full review and subsequent approval may include but are not limited to the following considerations:

- Whether the subjects are adequately protected
- Whether the research protocols and informed consent are in compliance with Federal Policy;
- Whether the researcher(s) are qualified to conduct or oversee the research;
- Whether the research is intended for publication or public review and the proposal is of high quality such that the research has the potential to add to a general body of knowledge.

17.1 Quality of the Research Proposal

The IRB evaluates the quality of the researcher's proposal to determine if the research, as planned, addresses the researcher's stated objectives. This is not an attempt to assure that all research is successful; rather it is an assurance for CSU and for the human subjects involved in the research that the proposal is complete and sound. Items that the IRB may consider include but are not limited to privacy of information and research design as it affects protection of human subjects.

- Clear and concise statement of the research hypothesis or hypotheses (if applicable), written in terms that are understandable to non-scientist members of the IRB.
- A full description of all procedures
- A description of the subject population, including the gender and racial/ethnic composition, and criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of any sub-population.
- A description of the means by which subjects will be recruited
- A discussion of any and all risks to subjects, and how any such risks will be minimized (include copies of all survey instruments, consent forms, assent forms, recruitment flyers, sample recruitment letters and advertisements).

18.0 Application and Review Process

All research involving human subjects conducted by students or faculty persons affiliated with CSU must be on file with the IRB and/or approved by the IRB before the research commences. The researcher must complete and submit an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application along with appropriate supporting paperwork (e.g., survey or communication tools associated with implementing the research, informed consent documents, etc.). Researchers must also submit an electronic training record documenting their completion of the CITI training for social and behavioral science researchers.

Upon receipt and initial review of the submitted materials, the IRB will inform the researcher whether the application has achieved exempt status or requires non-exempt review per IRB Review. Applicants requesting exemption from review must include sufficient documentation that the research does not fall under any category or criterion requiring non-exempt expedited or full review. Applications requiring non-exempt expedited review may be reviewed by the chairperson or one or more experienced reviewers on the IRB, but disapproval of the application can only result from a non-exempt full review of the application. Applications requiring non-exempt full review are reviewed by all members of the IRB. Applications that are approved will be assigned a periodic review cycle at which time the IRB approval expires for the research.